CHICAGO RIVER BASCULE BRIDGE, CLARK STREET
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor
North Clark Street crossing the Chicago River
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HAER No. IL-64

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor

HAER No. IL-64

Location:	I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor North Clark Street crossing the Chicago River Chicago, Cook County, Illinois UTM: E.447640 N.4637250 Quad: Chicago Loop
Date of Construction:	1929
Designing Engineer:	Loran D. Gayton, City Engineer, and Major Paul Shioler, City Bridge Engineer
Builder:	Substructure, American Bridge Company Superstructure, Ketler and Elliot Company
Present Owner:	City of Chicago
Present Use:	Vehicular Bridge
Significance:	The development of the Chicago trunnion bascule bridge occurred during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Despite the controversy over patent infringement -- Joseph E. Strauss charged the City of Chicago engineers with infringing on his patented Strauss-Trunion bascule bridge -- the Chicago bascule received great acclaim within the civil engineering profession.
Project Information:	The Illinois and Michigan Canal was designated a National Heritage Corridor in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER embarked on an extensive inventory and documentation project of the 100 mile-long corridor. Field work for this project was concluded in 1988. Final editing of the documentation was completed in 1992.
Historians:	Charles Scott, Frances Alexander, and John Nicolay, 1986.

The development of the Chicago trunnion bascule bridge was an important engineering achievement. The trunnion bascule bridge could accommodate the heavy demands of land and water traffic practically and efficiently. A bascule bridge was originally planned for Clark Street in 1916. However, the span was not erected until 1929. Fabricated by the American Bridge Company and erected by the Ketler and Elliot Company, this bridge is virtually identical to the LaSalle Street Bridge. Loran D. Gayton and Major Paul Shioler served as consulting engineers for the city.

The Clark Street Bridge is a single-deck, double-leaf, trunnion bascule bridge. The bridge measures 245'-0" from center to center of the trunnions and has a clear span of 215'-0". Superstructure is a steel pony truss with riveted gusset-plate connections. Width is 72'-0". The abutments are reinforced concrete with a rusticated concrete veneer. On each side of lift span is a bridge tender's house designed in the Beaux-Arts style. The bridge tenders' houses are identical in design with lightly scored concrete veneers, chamfered corners and ornamental pilasters, a sopraporta (over-door) containing a decorative arch, and a mansard-like tin roof with a raised diamond pattern. There are numerous multi-light windows along the facade of the pylons and large, one-over-one-light, double-hung, sash windows below the roof.

SOURCES:

Donald N. Becker, "Development of the Chicago Type Bascule Bridge, " Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineering, v. 109 (1944): 995-1046.

"Chicago Bascule Bridge- Design and Operating Features," Engineering News-Record, v. 85 (September 9, 1920): 508-514.

Chicago Department of Public Works, Chicago Public Works: A History (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973).

"Dredge Wrecks Drawbridge," Engineering News-Record, v. 102 (May 9, 1929): 769.

"Rapid Erection of Chicago Bascule Bridge in Emergency," Engineering News-Record, v. 103 (October 3, 1929): 527.